

American women make 78 cents for every dollar their male counterparts earn and the pay gap is significantly wider for female minorities. To overcome this difference, Congress made achieving equal pay for women one of the top priorities. In January, I voted for and Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, giving women the right to seek legal redress for wage discrimination. This act was the first major bill signed into law by President Obama, a week after he was inaugurated. The House also passed the Paycheck Fairness Act, which deters wage discrimination by closing loopholes in the Equal Pay Act.

This Congress, I was proud to introduce H.Res. 114, the National Girls and Women in Sports Day, which exists to overcome the final barriers for women in sports by celebrating female athletes' achievements, acknowledging the positive influence of sports participation in women's lives, and urging equality and access for women in sports. Athletics are one of the best opportunities for personal growth, and yet there has not always been an equal opportunity for everyone to participate. As a former athlete, I know firsthand the benefits of competing in sports; and everyone regardless of background should have equal access to be involved. I was privileged to introduce this legislation, which passed the House of Representatives on February 10, 2009, and highlight achievements of women in the 13th District:

[National Girls and Women in Sports Day](#)

[Honoring MacKenzie Brown for her Achievement in Sports](#)

Women's health issues have been overshadowed for far too long and more than 17 million women in the United States do not have any health care coverage. The 111th Congress is working to shine a spotlight on these important issues through health care reform and health initiatives. To meet the health care needs of women and their families, health care reform should ensure that our nation's health care system guarantees a choice of doctors and health care providers, high quality treatment, and lower costs. Additionally, we must pass initiatives, which I have supported such as increased funding for research, more access to medical services, and increased information for early detection of breast cancer, heart disease, stroke, and other women's health issues.

Finally, women's needs are especially critical on an international level. As a member of the

Foreign Affairs Committee, I have worked to address issues affecting women both home and abroad, especially access to education and health care. I have met with and send letters to the President of the World Bank, Robert Zoelick, to discuss microfinance and small loans that have a proven track record of helping women gain financial independence. In order to improve access to health care, I support funding to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve the health of newborns, children, and mothers in developing countries. I also believe that women and girls all over the world should have a say in their future, which is why I became a cosponsor of H.R. 2103, the International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act. This would direct the President to provide assistance, including through multilateral, nongovernmental, and faith-based organizations, to prevent child marriage in developing countries and to promote the educational, health, economic, social, and legal empowerment of women and girls. To this end, I am also a supporter of H.Res. 22, which expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the Senate should ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).